

GGG 340/540: Health Geography

Course Syllabus, Fall 2018, 3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE BASICS

Meeting times: Monday, 4:30 – 7:10pm
Location: 2103 Exploratory Hall
Web location: Blackboard (courses.gmu.edu)
Office hours: Monday, 7-8pm or by appt

SUGGESTED TEXT

Emch, M., Root, E.D., and M. Carrel. *Health and Medical Geography* (Fourth Edition). Guilford Press, New York. ISBN: 9781462520060

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This course surveys health geography, a subdiscipline of geography which encompasses a broad range of topics regarding human and environmental health. At its core, health geography is the study of human-environment interactions and the influence of these interactions on population health – i.e., how people interact with their physical and social environment to promote health and wellbeing or to increase their vulnerability to disease and/or illness. The approach taken in this course will focus on examining health-related issues (e.g., disease, illness, health care access, nutrition) from the perspective of populations. Major health issues and health care systems from around the world will be evaluated and discussed. The course covers three major integrated approaches to health geographic research: ecological (relationships between people and their environment), social (human behavior), and spatial (mapping and spatial analysis).

ASSIGNMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

All assignments will be available and submitted through Blackboard. While unlimited submissions are permitted in Blackboard, only the most recent submission will be graded. No late work will be accepted without a documented excuse.

GGG 540/340 is offered as a combined graduate/undergraduate course. Weekly meetings will include both lecture- and discussion-based material. While we may exhibit carrying “natural” proclivities for speaking out, it is imperative that everyone expresses their interpretations and views.

All students are expected to not only attend class, but also be active participants. Informed discussion and debate represent a key element to this course, and we can (and will) disagree. Expressions of disparate points of view are welcome, as reasonable minds may differ. Spirited debate is often illuminating. I have two caveats about this. First, express your views as informed scholars, giving a fair reading in terms of the context presented. Second, express your views and criticism in a constructive spirit. We should not expect a “love fest” of united peace and harmony each week, but I have the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.

My last name is pronounced LESS-LEE. My preference is that you address me as “Professor,” “Professor Leslie” or “Dr. Leslie.” If there is a specific way that you would like me to address you—including certain pronouns—please notify me as soon as possible.

GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor

Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format (or similar). A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient.

The principle of academic integrity is taken seriously, and violations are treated gravely. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct, and ignorance is not an excuse. Please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process.

GRADING SCHEMA

340 Students			540 Students		
Assessment	Points	% (of final grade)	Assessment	Points	% (of final grade)
Assignments (5)	160	40%	Assignments (5)	160	26.7%
Participation	40	10%	Participation	80	12.3%
Midterm Exam	100	25%	Midterm Exam	120	20%
Final Exam OR Paper	100	25%	Final Exam	120	20%
			Final Paper	120	20%

- Grades generally follow 90/80/70/60 with plus/minus being within 3 percent of the cutoffs. I reserve the right to alter the exact boundaries at the end of the semester.
- If you are not satisfied with your progress during the semester, please see me as early as possible; do not wait until the end of the semester to address these concerns.
- Participation points are generally garnered through the reflections and in-class discussions of the assigned readings. 340 Students will have their participation scores summed between the reflection and in-class discussions (with a maximum per session applied).
- The midterm exam will cover the first 7 weeks of the course. The final exam will be semi-comprehensive, focusing on the final 7 weeks of the course, but also covering key topics from throughout the entire semester.

GGS COMPUTER LAB ASSISTANCE

All students in GGS courses should receive “swipe” access (using your Student ID) to the GGS Student Computer Lab (Room 2102, Exploratory Hall) upon the start of the semester. If you are having problems with door access, please e-mail GGS administrator Sam Cooke (scooke4@gmu.edu) with SWIPE ACCESS in the subject line of your email.

If you experience problems with the computers (e.g., software or hardware issues) in the GGS Student Computer Lab, please email College of Science IT (cosit@gmu.edu) for technical assistance.

If you need an ArcGIS student key, please e-mail Dr. Leslie for a key.

Please copy Dr. Leslie on any e-mail correspondence to outside parties if it is related to this course.

READING REFLECTIONS

I am a proponent of writing as a means to develop critical thinking skills. Writing facilitates learning and helps sharpen and crystallize fuzzy thinking. In a sense, we do not know what we think exactly until someone tells us to express it in writing; what you have to say and how you say it are inextricable. Making sense of the “quantum haze” whirling around in our head via clear, expressive writing is a lifelong challenge, and is a challenge that, like any art or craft, takes practice. For each day of in-class discussion, students will write a brief essay (about 500 words) expressing your reaction to the reading.

When crafting essays keep in mind the nexus of cartography, geography, and cultural expression. In some instances, a personal observation, experience, activity, or event may stimulate a response to the reading. Making connections in this way can be illuminating. Feel free to draw upon your outside experiences in crafting your reaction essays. Producing finely polished products regularly is not the chief objective. The primary purpose is to express *your* thoughts and ideas vis-à-vis the reading. We are looking for agility, flexibility, and creativity in expression. You should seek interesting ways to express ideas through word choices, analogies and metaphors, phrasing, and varying sentence structure. Each paper is due half an hour before the start of class on the day we discuss the particular topic - *late essays will not be graded*.

DIVERSITY

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected. Notably, individuals are asked not to speak for the experience of others, nor to ask others to account for an entire demographic of which they may belong.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS

Students as Scholars is GMU's award-winning initiative to give students the opportunity to conduct undergraduate research. If you are interested in conducting research or simply learning more about the program, check out oscar.gmu.edu or stop by the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research to learn about the many programs available to GMU students.

GMU RESOURCES

The Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University Libraries, Ask a Librarian: <http://library.gmu.edu/ask>

Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu>

University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu>

University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

OUTLINE & SCHEDULE (subject to change)

	Lecture Topics	Textbook Add-on	Participation	HW / Exam
1	M, 8/27	Introduction Questions in Health Geography Defining Health	Emch et al Chp 1, Gatrell and Elliott Chp 1	
	M, 9/3	No Class, Labor Day Break		
2	M, 9/10	Disease Ecology	Emch et al Chp 2	#1
3	M, 9/17	GIS, Maps, and Spatial Analysis in Health Geography	Emch et al Chp 5	Assignment #1 Due, Essential Health Terms and Concepts
4	M, 9/24	Expanding Disease Ecology	Emch et al Chp 3 & 7	#2 Assignment #2 Due, Diseases and Study Area
5	M, 10/1	Demographic and Epidemiological Transitions	Emch et al Chp 4	#3
6	T, 10/9	Urban Health and Landscape Epidemiology	Emch et al Chp 10	Assignment #3 Due, Mapping and Visualization
7	M, 10/15	Neighborhoods and Health Review for Midterm	Emch et al Chp 9 Gatrell and Elliott Chp 6	#4
	M, 10/22	MIDTERM EXAM		
9	M, 10/29	Health Care and Health Promotion, Health Care Access	Emch et al Chp 13 Gatrell and Elliott Chp 7, Newhouse et al Chap 2	#5 Assignment #4, Due Demographic and Epidemiological Transitions
10	M, 11/5	Disease Diffusion in Space	Emch et al Chp 6	#6
11	M, 11/12	Foster Care and Social Services	TBD	Assignment #5, Health Care Systems
12	M, 11/19	Political Ecology, Climate and Weather, Environmental Exposure	Emch et al Chp 11 & 12, Gatrell and Elliott Chp 11	#7 Draft Papers
13	M, 11/26	The Geography of Nutrition	Emch et al Chp 8	
14	M, 12/3	Course Wrap Up Review for Final Exam		#8 Final Papers
	M, 12/17	FINAL EXAM (4:30 – 7:10pm)		